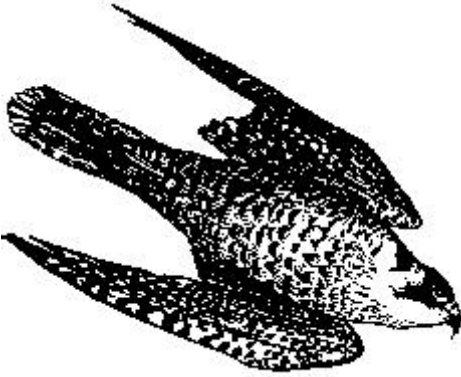




Draft Environmental Assessment on Falconry Take of Nestling American Peregrine Falcons



The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is one of the most widespread and best known raptor species. The American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) occurs throughout much of North America from the subarctic boreal forests of Alaska and Canada south to Mexico.

Peregrine falcons declined precipitously in North America following World War II, primarily due to organochlorine pesticides. The chemicals seriously affected peregrines, particularly in the eastern U.S., where peregrines had virtually disappeared by the mid-1960s. The American peregrine falcon was added to the list of threatened and endangered species in 1970.

With concerted recovery efforts by individuals, States, and Federal agencies, the American peregrine falcon population has grown substantially over much of its ranges in the last 30 years. With the growth in numbers, the Fish and Wildlife Service removed the American peregrine falcon from the list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants in August 1999.

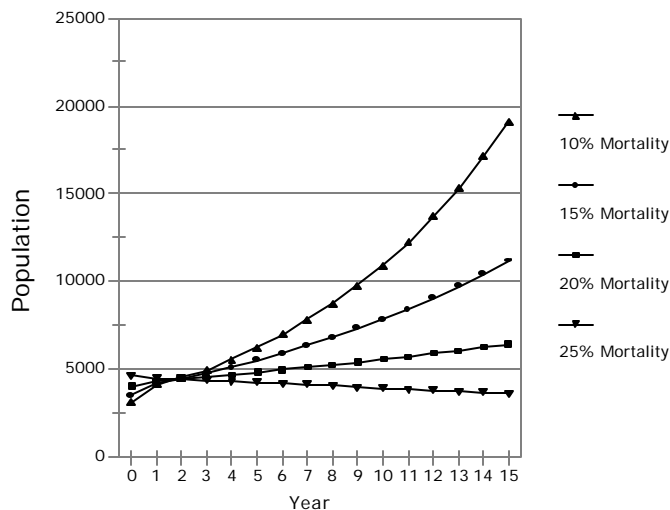
Anticipating delisting, in June 1999 a number of state wildlife agencies proposed allowing a limited take of nestling American peregrines for falconry. In October 1999, we published a Notice of Intent to prepare two Management Plans and associated Environmental Assessments for Take of Wild Peregrine Falcons. We stated that we would protect nestling and dispersing juvenile American peregrine falcons from southeastern Canada and the eastern U.S. while considering a conservative take of nestlings from healthy populations in the West.



In a Draft Environmental Assessment now available, we evaluated the effects of take of nestling American peregrines on population growth in the United States. We assessed the effects of take of nestlings recommended by the States, *i.e.* take in 11 contiguous western States and in Alaska (where approximately 82% of the nesting pairs in the United States were found in 1998), as well as five alternatives.

We assessed the effects of different levels of take, and because population changes also are greatly influenced by adult survival, we assessed the effects of different take levels with different values for adult mortality. We believe that 20% post-first-year mortality is a conservative and reasonable value to use, but we also modeled population growth using 10%, 15%, and 25% annual mortality of adults.

Based on recent nesting population and productivity data, the proposed action of allowing take of 5% of the nestlings in western states could mean an initial annual take of approximately 82 nestlings if all States west of 100° longitude allowed take. We believe that this take would allow population growth of about 3% per year if post-first-year mortality is 20%. The American peregrine falcon population in the west could reach approximately 6438 birds in 15 years. Population growth with that level of take and other mortality rates is shown in the graph below.



Population growth with take of 5% of annual production at different mortality rates.



We encourage interested individuals and groups to review the assessment and provide comments. Your comments can help us determine the appropriate level of take. You can obtain a copy of the Draft Environmental Assessment from our web site at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/issues/americanperegrines/draftea.html>, or by contacting this office.

Send your comments by September 23rd, 2000 to Jon Andrew, Chief of the Division of Migratory Bird Management, at the address below, or email them to us at American_Peregrine_EA@fws.gov.

Division of Migratory Bird Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 634
 Arlington, VA 22203-1610
 703-358-1714 703-358-2272 fax
<http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

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